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ABSTRACT

A study at Prestonsburg Community College (Kentucky) hypothesized that team teaching interpersonal communication could enhance learning for both students and instructors, by providing students with additional expertise and individual contact, and by giving instructors the opportunity to compare teaching methods and alternative exercises. Results indicated that team teaching had a positive effect on the students': (1) examination scores; (2) interpersonal communication skills; (3) motivation; and (4) attitudes toward team teaching in general. Results also demonstrated, however, that some students felt threatened by having two instructors, and were uncertain about their grades due to occasional conflicting feedback on assignments and exams. (The original grant proposal and the final report are attached.) (PRA)

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TEAM TEACHING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Presented at the 1991 Southern State Communication Association Conference

Hyatt Regency Westshore

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Abstract: The original grant proposal was based on beliefs that team teaching can enhance learning for students and instructors by offering students the expertise of more than one faculty member and providing more individual contact, and by allowing instructors an opportunity to compare teaching methods and offering various and alternative exercises to illustrate theories being taught. Funding for this project came from the University of Kentucky Community College System Office in Lexington, KY.

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Two instructors at Prestonsburg Community College, a small, two-year campus affiliated with the University of Kentucky Community College System, chose to submit a mini-grant proposal to the UKCCS office (copies of the initial proposal and the final report are attached). Because both instructors taught the same course on the same evening, such a change would create no scheduling problem. More importantly, with already large classes and consistent enrollment increase each semester, the chance to do anything to decrease student-teacher ratio and create alternative educational experiences was almost nonexistent without some kind of special funding. The participating faculty members saw the potential for several benefits to both students and instructors.

The potential benefits for students included:

1) a lower student-teacher ratio;
2) better instruction resulting from:
    a) material divided between faculty members according to interest and expertise;
    b) varied teaching methods;
    c) varied activities;
    d) less boredom in the classroom;
3) increased supervision of hands-on exercises involving dyads, small groups, and role-playing with two instructors;
4) better review and examination design;
5) more assessment of the achievement of communication competency;
6) additional feedback on written and oral assignments;
7) more accurate assessment of classroom participation;

The potential benefits for instructors included:

1) co-mentorship;
2) increase of expertise in weaker areas;
3) additional exercises for future classes; and
4) feedback and criticism for improvement of instruction.

Assessment of the success of this pilot team teaching project included a variety of comparisons between the team taught course and the other COM 252 course offered by the participating instructors during the same semester, including comparing the results of participation and scores on exercises (when applicable) and examinations. In addition, application exercises were evaluated by students and instructors. Results of the Student Evaluations of Instruction were also compared between team taught and other classes. Finally, an overall evaluation of the team taught course was created by the participating instructors and completed by the students.

The results were interesting, and several of the potential benefits the instructors felt existed were realized. Discoveries included the following:

1) Scores on examinations were higher in the team taught section.
2) A pretest and posttest on attitudes toward interpersonal communication were distributed to team taught and other classes, and the team taught class showed markedly more improvement.
3) Application exercises were evaluated more positively in the team taught course, though all classes indicated enjoying the exercises.

4) The overall evaluation of the team taught class were very favorable toward, the concept of team teaching, the lower student-teacher ratios, and the instructors.

5) The results of the Student Evaluations of Instruction, however, contradicted all the other results. Students made comments that indicated feeling threatened as a result of having two instructors. Students also indicated uncertainty about grades because of the occasionally conflicting feedback on assignments, examinations, etc.

The participating instructors feel like team teaching was a valuable experience. Each had an opportunity to observe the teaching style of the other. In addition, each learned content from the other, and added to the examples and illustrations that can be used in class. It was felt that the biggest benefit to result from this team teaching experience was that the instructors had the chance to actually model the behaviors that a course in Interpersonal Communication tries to demonstrate.

During this entire semester, both instructors also went through the college's Teaching Improvement Process (TIP), and this is the class that was used for evaluation. All the feedback received from students and the supervising faculty member was very positive, giving each participating faculty member even more suggestions for improvement as far as classroom skills were concerned. It is hoped that this team teaching experience can be repeated in the future. maybe just at it was done or possibly changing participants or class time or location to see if the same kinds of results can be achieved.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECT IN PLANNING/TEACHING OVERENROLLED COM 252 COURSE

This project proposal comes after five semesters of offering at least two sections of COM 252 during each semester on the same evening. In Fall of 1987, the course was offered on Tuesday evenings; sections were taught by Ms. Laura Weddle and Ms. Hope Bennin. In Spring of 1988, the course was offered on Wednesday evenings; sections were taught by Ms. Laura Weddle and Ms. Hope Bennin. In Fall of 1988 and Spring of 1989, the course was offered on Tuesday evenings; sections were taught by Ms. Laura Weddle and Ms. Hope Bennin. This semester, the course is being offered again on Tuesday evenings; sections are being taught by Ms. Hope Bennin and Ms. Eileen Lewandowski. In Spring of 1990, the course will be offered on Tuesday nights; however, one section does not have an instructor listed.

There is the possibility of the course not having enough enrollment to justify leaving two sections on the schedule. This results in some students being turned away. Thus, the idea of team teaching came to mind. Though the idea of team teaching is certainly far from new, it is an alternative tried only once on this campus in the Composition classroom, not in the Interpersonal Communication classroom.

Thus, the Collaborative Project before you has been thought through, discussed, and structured so it can be put into practice during the 1990 Spring Semester. Classroom Assessment Techniques, a handbook designed and written by K. Patricia Cross and Thomas A. Angelo, will be utilized, along with the TIPS manuals, including "Planning for Instruction," "Instructional Objectives," "The Lecture," "Questioning: The Mechanics and Dynamics," "Student Involvement Techniques," and "Developing Written Tests." The "Set-Body-Closure" concept will be utilized throughout the semester at each class meeting to tie together material, assist students in recall of material already discussed, and give the instructors an opportunity to discover concepts which have not been accepted and/or processed by students. Hopefully, if the course is successful, night classes with larger enrollments can be offered and faculty can share expertise and effort in reaching the students.

The potential instructional improvement is great. First, the student/teacher ratio can improve; instead of having an enrollment of 25 per class for two classes, the enrollment cap should be 40 per one class. Second, with two intructors instead of one, the presentation of material can be divided evenly; this offers more of a variety to students, allows instructors to present material more in line with their expertise, and leaves less room for boredom to be a factor. Third, when doing small group exercises, there will be two circulating and evaluating small group involvement. Twice the number of questions can be answered and twice the assessment can be done. Fourth, two instructors will be designing examinations. This leaves less margin for errors, bad questions, and inconsistency in achieving the competencies established by the campus in the area of Communication. Fifth, students will get two people's feedback on written work turned in. This assists the instructors in a more thorough evaluation and gives the students more of an opportunity to learn the writing skills essential to success. In addition to the benefits to student learning, the two instructors can act as mentor to each other; thus, feedback can be provided to both instructors.

The activities, procedures, and materials are as follows:

1. Textbook
2. Supplemental Texts (only instructors need these)
3. Lecture Notes
4. Discussion Questions
5. Application Activities for each Chapter
6. Journals
7. Videotaping of Selected Application Exercises
8. Midterm Examination
9. Final Examination

The total amount of this grant request is estimated as follows:

1.	Supplemental Texts (2 @ $25.00/book)	$ 50.00
2.	Videotapes (6 @ $5.00/tape)	$ 30.00
3.	3½" Computer Discs (2 @ $3.50/disc)	$ 7.00
4.	Faculty Time (100 hours @ $7.50/hour)	$750.00
TOTAL:		$837.00

The results of this project will be assessed in several ways. First, there are two examinations: a midterm and a final. Grades on these exams should reflect learning greater than that in the other courses offered by the two instructors during the same semester. Second, application exercises for each chapter as a whole will be evaluated by students and instructors. (See Appendix I for copies of Evaluation Forms for the first seven weeks.) Third, results of the Student Evaluation of Instruction in this project class will be compared with the evaluations from other COM 252 courses taught by the two instructors. (See Appendix II for copy of Student Evaluation of Instruction.) Fourth, an overall evaluation will be completed by students during the final examination period. (See Appendix III for copy of Overall Evaluation.) This instrument will specifically address the effectiveness of this course taught by two instructors. Finally, a report will be drafted using the results of all evaluations and other educational tools used during the semester. This report will also include evaluations and observations, both positive and negative, by both instructors.

Appendix IV is a copy of the syllabus and course outline for proposed course.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECT IN PLANNING/TEACHING OVERENROLLED COM 252 COURSE
Final Report

The close of the semester brought mixed feelings about the team teaching approach to the Introductory Interpersonal Communication project, most of which were positive. Much was learned by all persons involved.

The enrollment in the night class at midterm and for the final exam was 21. In Ms. Lewandowski's day classes, attendance dropped from 26 to 19 (one of whom received an incomplete and is not calculated in to results). Ms. Bennin's day class attendance went from 32 to 30, a difference of only two. This means that keeping students in the class was not a problem. There were several tools used throughout the semester to assist in making the night class better. Midterms and finals were developed within the first week of the semester to assure that the instructors were not "teaching to the test." There were a select number of questions (5) on the midterm that the majority answered incorrectly; however, these questions were consistent across Ms. Lewandowski's day classes, Ms. Bennin's day classes, and the night class, so the problem areas have been noted by both instructors and consistency in teaching and classes among the three groups which were being observed is indicated. On the final exam, one three questions appeared to have confused students. These questions, too, have been noted and will be rewritten or tossed out. After reading through Cross and Angelo's Classroom Assessment Techniques and the material handed out at the Instructional Skills Development Workshop about "Developing Written Tests," compiling the midterm and final exams went much more smoothly and grades were higher than on exams given in the past. One problem indicated by the students was that the exams were too long (150 items - 90 True/False and 60 Multiple Choice). As a result of this feedback, the exams will be broken up into chapter "quizzes" for the summer session and fall semester. This way, the same amount of material can be covered and tested in smaller increments.

The midterm exam grades averaged as follows:

Ms. Lewandowski's Day Classes:	107.1
Ms. Bennin's Day Classes:	108.9
Team Taught Night Class:	118.8

The final exam grades averaged as follows:

Ms. Lewandowski's Day Classes:	114.8
Ms. Bennin's Day Classes:	111.9
Team Taught Night Class:	125.7

These exam grades indicate that the students learned how to study for an open book/notes exam more efficiently. The grades were higher in the night class to begin with, but marked improvement can be seen in both Ms. Lewandowski's day classes and the team taught night class. Ms. Bennin's day classes showed limited improvement. The difference between the two sets of day classes might be explained by the disappearance of students. Ms. Lewandowski lost the majority of her students who were not doing well in the course for one reason or another.

Another assessment used throughout the semester was chapter evaluations. As it turns out, these chapter evaluations indicated very little. There were a handful of comments about exercises that a select few students did not enjoy but, overall, the conclusion that can be drawn from these assessments was that students like applying the theory learned through exercises done in their respective classes. In the night class, an overall course evaluation specifically addressing the team taught class was completed. The results were as follows:

1. Was this course useful?

Yes	17
Somewhat	01
No	00

2. What in this course have you applied in your life?

Just about every concept in every chapter I have tried to use.
Listening more. Trying to become more understanding. Trying to become more assertive.
Communicating more freely. Listening better.
Trying to be a better listener, communicator, and trying to look at things in a different perspective.
Better understanding and communication.
Listening better, becoming more aware of the things I do and say.
More self-confidence in myself.
Making decisions on my own.
Communicating better with others.
Better self-disclosure. Better awareness of value of communication.
Become more open.
Ways to listen better.
Controlling my temper. Becoming a better listener. Using more diplomacy. Taking a good look at myself.
Assertiveness, supportive behaviors, better listening.
Thinking before I speak. Trying to be more assertive. Working on better communication.
Different things.
Communication techniques. Expressing your emotions.
Being more assertive and voicing my opinion and saying no.

3. Did you like doing application exercises on a week-to-week basis?

Yes	11
Sometimes	05
No	02

4. Did you like having two instructors?

Yes	11
Somewhat	04
No	03

5. Were the instructors prepared?

Yes	17
Sometimes	01
No	00

6. Did the instructors work well together?

Yes	16
Somewhat	02
No	00

7. Did the instructors divide the work in class evenly?

Yes	18
Somewhat	00
No	00

8. Were the instructors consistent with their evaluations of work handed in?

Yes	16
Somewhat	02
No	00

9. Would you recommend this course to others?

Yes	16
Possibly	01
No	01

10. Explain your answer to Question #9.

Because I'd rather have one teacher.
It helps to enhance relationships.
I think this course helps people deal with life better.
This course is very helpful if it is taught in a way that you understand it.
I think this course is good for people who need to be more assertive. It kind of builds one's confidence.
It can help you in your personal life.
This is a class that can be used daily. Helps to have an understanding of others and yourself.
I think it is good for people to be aware of how to communicate and its effects.
I would recommend this class because it gives you a chance to meet and get to know other people.
It makes a person become more aware of themselves and the people around them. It is also very interesting.
It has been useful in communicating with the small conflict that can occur in everyday life.
Everyone needs to learn how to communicate better with others and why they feel the way they do toward others.
This course will help everyone because everyone communicates.
I found it very interesting and had a lot of fun.
Communication is an important part of our everyday life. Knowing how to communicate can clear up misunderstandings between people and can keep them from happening.

11. What is your feeling about team teaching after taking this course?

I'd rather not have it.
It can make the class more enjoyable.
Positive.

I'm not sure I like it. It's like trying to please two husbands. You're note sure what each one wants.
I don't like the team teaching. I felt conflict between the two teachers.
I felt that having two instructors was fun, but we weren't able to have a personal involvement with our teachers. Just about the time I thought I had figured out what was expected of me, then I found out I was wrong. What I mean to say is, we didn't get to know you well enough. But the class was fun, I had a good time.
Grading standards and responsibilities need to be thoroughly worked out before classes begin.
It can be effective if they are both consistent and share the same ideas.
It is effective.
I realize that all people are unique, but sometimes people and their ideas conflict. This can be somewhat confusing. I think it has its good points and its bad.
I like it. It's different, but fun. When one can't be there, the other can.
It offers a wider variety of ideas. This helps.
It's all right.
They help each other out.
Value input from each person. Get more than one person's opinion.
I liked it because it provided variety and the class was less boring.
I feel that team teaching is beneficial to everybody.

Comments:
I feel I learned some interesting things.

The overall course evaluation indicated that the students did, in fact, like the team teaching approach. The few negative comments made by a handful of students might possibly be the result of conflicting ideas. In the course, conflict is talked about and research indicates that people are uncomfortable with conflict. Team teaching situations are no different, and the two teachers did not always agree on theory, examples, or what was/was not important. This is understandable with two instructors. It is important to note that there were no **major** differences of opinion, nor were there any major confrontations in front of class or behind the scenes.

A third tool used to indicate student progress in each of the five classes taught by Ms. Lewandowski and Ms. Bennin during the 1990 Spring Semester was an Interpersonal Communication Inventory (attached). The team taught course base scores were higher than any of the day classes'. The point improvements were as follows:

Ms. Lewandowski's Section 1:	1.57
Ms. Lewandowski's Section 6:	2.55
Ms. Bennin's Section 5:	3.18
Ms. Bennin's Section 8:	-1.00
Team Taught Night Course:	5.00

The improvements above indicate that even though the night class started at a higher base score, their improvement was also the greatest. This supports the fact that team teaching is advantageous for students.

The other evaluation used this semester was the Student Evaluation of Instruction. The results of these evaluations completely contradicted all the chapter evaluations, overall course evaluation and improvements made by students in the courses. The comments were negative, almost cruel in some cases. There may be several explanations for this:

(1) lack of self-esteem in students;
(2) pressure toward the end of the semester, causing an outburst of emotion on the evaluations;
(3) lack of ability to understand conflict as one way of learning;
(4) illness of one of the instructors;
(5) exercises threatening; and/or
(6) two "outsiders" teaching the class together.

Lack of self-esteem in students can create vengeful feelings in students toward their instructors. Pressure as the semester moves closer to the end can certainly cause emotional responses rather than objective ones. Students who do not see conflict as a way of learning instead of something negative may have perceived a problem between the instructors when, in fact, there was none. For persons who were expecting to come in, sit down, and listen to a 2½ hour lecture each week, the course was probably disappointing and even threatening, because there was a great deal of participation required. The fact that no one dropped the team taught course indicates that students were pleased with the course up until the last few weeks. In addition, the content during the last few weeks of the course included conflict, communicating with family and friends, and intimacy, all topics difficult to discuss in a classroom setting. Students may have perceived the appropriate activities as too personal and may still have felt required to participate, even though students were told they did not have to participate if they felt like their privacy was being invaded.

The Student Evaluations of Instruction for **all** other day classes taught by Ms. Lewandowski and Ms. Bennin indicated competence, positive attitudes and high recommendations about the course. This inconsistency is the only less than positive result of an otherwise enjoyable experience. The instructors felt the student/teacher contact was exceptional, the opportunity to work together was valuable and educational, and the chance to actually **model** interpersonal communication was the best learning tool of all. The result of all this work was higher grades and a greater positive shift in interpersonal attitudes and knowledge in the team taught course.

As a result of using this course for Teaching Improvement Process purposes as well during the 1990 Spring Semester, the inconsistency was even more noticeable. After the TABS was given and tabulated, it was difficult to come up with anything to put on the Post-TABS. The feedback from the regional TIP meeting was very enthusiastic and positive, as were the TABS results. This is what caused the majority of confusion for both instructors. There was no indication until course evaluations were given upon submission of final grades that there was a different perception of the course from students than from instructors. This prompted meetings to figure out some of the possible reasons for the discrepancy.

Despite the fact that the Student Evaluations of Instruction were so poor, the two instructors have chosen to team teach again in the 1990 Fall semester in the hopes that improvements can be made and students can improve even more over the course of a semester. In addition to this report, the two instructors hope to get an article prepared for possible publication in a regional journal or in Communication Education. It is also possible that a proposal will be sent in to state, regional and/or national conferences to discuss the team teaching approach in Interpersonal Communication with other communication faculty. Any resulting articles, proposals and/or presentations will be directed to Mr. Kerwin's office to be included with the minigrant proposal and the follow-up report.

Both instructors would like to take this opportunity to thank UK for the opportunity to work on a project of this nature. This team will continue to communicate regarding progress in the 1990 Fall Semester course. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact either of the faculty members involved in this minigrant.

Eileen M. Lewandowski 5-9-90

Ms. Eileen M. Lewandowski, Instructor Date

Hope E. Bennin 5-9-90

Ms. Hope E. Bennin, Instructor Date